



Butterfly Gardening

Butterfly Gardening Facts

- **Butterfly gardening can be grown throughout the United States. There is a wide variety of both butterfly attracting (nectar) plants and host plants covering climate zones throughout the country.**
- **Butterfly gardens can range in size from a few containers placed in a sunny spot to several acres.**
- **Nectar-producing plants will attract butterflies to your garden. In order to support a full butterfly lifecycle, host plants (for laying eggs and for a caterpillar food source) must also be present.**
- **Throughout the country, the general requirements for a butterfly garden are the same: full sun, nectar source plants, larval host plants, a pesticide-free environment, and knowledge of the local butterfly fauna.**
- **Butterfly gardens are best planted in the spring with younger plants or in the fall with mature plants that will become dormant quickly and re-emerge in the spring (perennials). It is best not to plant in the heat of the summer or the cold of the winter.**
- **Many butterfly-attracting plants are natives and require little attention, as they are naturally adapted to the region in which they live.**
- **Placing shallow dishes of water around the garden will draw butterflies to drink. Males of several species congregate at small rain pools, forming puddle clubs. Permanent puddles are very easy to make by burying a bucket to the rim, filling it with gravel or sand, and then pouring in liquids such as stale beer, sweet drinks or water. Overripe fruit, allowed to sit for a few days is a very attractive substance to them as well.**
- **One of the most common mistakes in butterfly gardening is planting only one nectar source. Adult butterflies have a very short lifespan. Planting a variety of nectar sources will encourage more butterflies to visit the garden. Planting an adequate supply of host plants gives butterflies a place to lay their eggs, which will successfully hatch and result in butterflies that will continue to visit the garden.**
- **Butterflies typically lay their eggs in late spring and hatch 3-6 days after they are laid. It takes 3-4 weeks for a caterpillar to pupate and 9-14 days to emerge as an adult.**

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Host Plants

Each butterfly species uses only one of a handful of specific plant species as a host plant. For example, Monarchs will only lay eggs on milkweed plants, and Monarch caterpillars will only eat milkweed. If they run out of milkweed they will die, as they will not eat anything else.

It isn't practical for most people to provide host plants for every species that lives in the area - there can be over 50 different species in your area! It is, however, possible to grow plants for a large variety of species. The following varieties can host up to 20 different types of butterflies. They are divided up into groups based on their size and shape. Please keep in mind that these size/type divisions are only a rough estimate. The amount of light, water, soil conditions, etc. can affect how big some of these plants will get.

Herbs/Short Flowering Plants

Borage - *Borago officinalis*
Fennel - *Foeniculum vulgare*
Malva - *Malva sylvestris*
Butterfly Weed - *Asclepias tuberosa*
Parsley - *Petroselinum crispum*
Plantain - *Plantago lanceolata*
Purple Prairie Clover - *Dalea purpurea*
Rue - *Ruta graveolens*
Snapdragon - *Antirrhinum majus*
Wild Violet - *Viola sororia*
White Clover - *Trifolium repens*
Yarrow - *Achillea millefolium*

Vines

Pipevine - *Aristolochia tomentosa*
Passion vine - *Passiflora incarnata*
Hops - *Humulus Lupulus*

Bushes & Shrubs

Hop Tree/Wafer Ash - *Ptelea trifoliata*
Lead Plant - *Amorpha canescens*
Partridge Pea - *Chamaecrista/Cassia fasciculata*
Prickly Ash - *Zanthoxylum americanum*
Sandbar Willow - *Salix exigua*
Sassafras - *Sassafras albidum*
Spicebush - *Lindera benzoin*
Pussy Willow - *Salix discolor*

Herbs/Taller Flowering Plants

New England Aster - *Aster novae-angliae*
False Nettle - *Boehmeria cylindrica*
Hollyhock - *Alcea rosea*
Swamp Milkweed - *Asclepias incarnata*
Tropical Milkweed - *Asclepias curassavica*
Wild Senna - *Senna marylandica*
Stinging Nettle - *Urtica dioica*
Sunflower - *Helianthus annuus*
Pipevine - *Aristolochia tomentosa*
Passion vine - *Passiflora incarnata*
Hops - *Humulus Lupulus*

Trees

Pawpaw - *Asimina triloba*
Black Willow - *Salix nigra*
Tuliptree/Yellow-poplar - *Liriodendron tulipifera*
Hackberry - *Celtis Occidentalis*
Sweet Bay Magnolia - *Magnolia virginiana*

Nectar Plants

The following plants are some of the most popular used for attracting butterflies in this area. There are many more that can be used, which can be found by doing research on different butterfly species.

Annuals

Lantana
Pentas
Verbena
Alyssum
Cosmos
Heliotrope
Impatiens
Marigolds
Zinnias

Bushes & Shrubs

Butterfly bush - *Buddleia davidii*
Azalea
Blue Mist Spirea - *Caryopteris*
Sweet Pepper Bush - *Clethra*
Laurel - *Kalmia*
Honeysuckle - *Lonicera*
Pussy Willow - *Salix*
Lilac - *Syringa*

Perennials

Pin Cushion Flower - *Scabiosa columbaria*
Agastache/Anise Hyssop - *Agastache foeniculum*
Black-eyed Susan - *Rudbeckia hirta*
Blanket Flower - *Gaillardia grandiflora*
Cardinal Flower - *Lobelia cardinalis*
Joe Pye Weed - *Eupatorium purpureum*
Prairie Liatris - *Liatris pycnostachya*
Purple Coneflower - *Echinacea purpurea*
Yarrow - *Achillea*
Hollyhocks - *Alcea*